

The American Public Gas Association Security and Integrity Foundation

The American Public Gas Association Security and Integrity Foundation (SIF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. APGA, a 501(c)(6), created the SIF in 2004. The SIF is dedicated to promoting the security and operational integrity and safety of small natural gas distribution and utilization facilities. The SIF will focus its resources on enhancing the abilities of gas utility operators to prevent, mitigate and repair damage to the nation's small gas distribution infrastructure.

Small gas systems are very conscientious and dedicated to maintaining records of safety and operational excellence. For decades, many of the nation's small systems and master meter systems assisted one another to comply with state and federal pipeline safety standards. APGA assisted its members whenever possible through its Operations Committee and by representing small systems on national codes and standards. Recently, APGA published an operator safety manual that is now an essential tool for small operators across the country.

Economies of scale favor larger systems by spreading compliance costs over a greater number of customers. For example, a small operator serving 800 homes and businesses does not have the same economy of scale as a gas utility serving 800,000 meters. The term "small operators" as used in this proposal refers to operators of small gas utilities, master meter systems and propane piping systems. Nonetheless, the safety records of our nation's smallest operators continue to be identical to that of the largest operators. But, as new safety standards are promulgated and the compliance costs grow ever larger, the limited resources of small systems become increasingly strained. And, small systems must now also prepare for incidents that result from both intentional and unintentional acts.

Initial SIF efforts under the first cooperative agreement with PHMSA focused on providing education, training, materials, services and products specifically designed to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of small distribution system, master meter system operators and propane piping system operators. It also focused on increasing small operators' compliance with DOT Operator Qualification (OQ) requirements.